

However, credit where credit is due: Wendy Carlos to find out this soon in the exploration of just scales that commas in actual performance can be a nuisance. Instead of demanding that everybody use commas 81:80 all the time in every kind of music for every kind of instrument. That is just as bad as John R. Pierce's book making out the comma to be a horror so terrible that it must be rejected without ever being heard at all. Synthesizers will be able to provide commas when this is suitable and effective.

I got horrible denunciations from every guitarist that I told that if they demanded only just fretting for guitars, they would have to provide at least some frets a comma apart. They couldn't get their fingers in between the 1/55-octave-spaced frets, they claimed. Well if I can, they can. But who the hell wants to go to this trouble with wound guitar strings and especially nylon strings that may be out of tune with themselves? That's what makes the purism and power trip of Doty so nasty and unbearable.

Remember the 19-tone aluminum tubes made by Glen Prior and that you saw at Jonathan's house? They are now here in the back yard with the new mounting of new foam on wooden rails and the foam stapled down under every tube to keep it in its depressions so it won't roll over to the next tube and bump it.

I got over to a synthesizer store where their main business is repair. One fellow there had succeeded in making a Juno or some similar synthesizer play 23- and 24-tone by forcing the filters to oscillate. He had been to the University and knew the people in the Patch ensemble so knew a great deal about non-12.

Richard Koerner called me from Connecticut again and says he will loan me a synthesizer and send it out here soon. I wonder--this has been going on some time.

I am currently doing 4-track master no. 12 and this begins with the Newel Post and cello parts overlaid on that and the fretless banjo on Track 4 to brighten the effect--two cello parts a little too mor mournful when used with the Newel Post chords somehow. But seasoned here and there with the banjo (12-string) this is remedied well enough.

I can claim just intonation since no frets are involved whatsoever. However, the Purists like Doty will still scold me and hate me to pieces since the Newel Post and the cello MUST slide up and down frequently and the banjo without frets also can glide. Now when you have a VARYING PITCH on top of other such, what is the ratio? You need Calculus for that. Variables on top of other variables! IT WORKS OF COURSE, BUT THE PURISTS CANNOT STAND TO HAVE THEIR BEAUTIFUL THEORIES RUINED. So to the ashcan with me. Well I would like to give each of them a catheter for Christmas.

The battle of Theorists vs. Composers, really. Progress in music prevented by various vested interests who don't want new music that would be impossible to perform on what the manufacturers are tooled-up to make. I don't know how much encounter you had with Kurt Stone who lived in Connecticut at the time he blasted me. (Eleven years ago or such a matter.) He ordered, demanded, commanded, me to quit microtones and go in for involved rhythms instead. No performer would play non-12, he claimed. Of course your Concert Series refutes that completely.

Sorry it took me so long--about ten years--to get to performing on the Newel Post to record it other than just demonstrating its possibilities. Once I have copies of that tape it will be obvious to other people how to start playing it. The Newel Post is intended to be (1) a harmonic lab for composers and arrangers and harmony teachers (2) a performance instrument akin to the Pedal Steel but no complicated mechanism and much longer strings than a Pedal Steel can have since so much guitar-string-length is eaten up by the stretching and relaxing mechanism. Different stringings and tunings, of course, for these two uses.

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Greetings from out West ****

The tubulongs are laid out at last. What I mean is that Jonathan first stumbled on a place that carried a better plastic foam in rod form. $\frac{1}{2}$ " or slightly larger round rod with a greenish tinge; and it can be slit with a razor blade to semicircular cross-section, so that it can be glued or taped down on wooden railk railings. Jonathan's second idea, was to get out the electric staple-gun and staple it down under the center of every tube to be supported on the rails. This puts a valley or depression or dip in the foam and the tubes lie in predetermined spots. That makes the thing portable. No gluing down the tubes to keep them in place, so off they go in the carrying-box.

Not practical for the metal bars of course--too wide.
The 13-tone metal bars lie properly on the foam of their own weight.

What are we going to do about the disinformation about Meantone? I am very annoyed when this doctrine of the Compulsory Unavoidable Wolf keeps coming up in print again and again. Latest and possibly very harmful is the item in the Wendy Carlos Interviews where she advocates meantone to get rid of commas (that is of course a good thing in performances where the comma is a nuisance in many cases) but only has 12 pitch-classes available at any one time. Avoiding wolves by constantly shifting the tonal center or the group of twelve fifths which is at the moment to be available on the 12-tone keyboard, so that nevernever wi, will the pairs such as G-sharp and A-flat be available at the same time. As though more-than-12 keyboard did not exist.

Or, much worse still!, that there is no reason or need to play an augmented seventh or some other such chord that sounds both notes separated by a diësis simultaneously. The inaudible difference between 31-equal and $\frac{1}{4}$ comma meantone is also not mentioned at all. That sounds like classified secrets or something--no-one is supposed to reveal that everything that meantone can do is imitated so closely by 31 a that there is no need to go to the expense of say 40 pitches of meantone. Glen Prior did go to the trouble on his marimba providing several pairs of bars 6¢ apart such things as G-double-flat and E-double-sharp (i.e. his duplicates occur at the remote point on the 31-tone circle.) Well you simply cannot hear the 6 cent difference on rosewood marimba bars under ordinary room noise level and in the presence of ordinary listening conditions in any realistic performance setting. They do not sustain long enough to do enough beating, and have no harmonics to reinforce the perception of the slight pitch difference. It might be different with a 31-tone vs. a strict-meantone organ in a quiet room with no distractions.

I surely do not claim my 31-tone fretting is that accurate! Even if it were so accurate, the irregularities of guitar strings would mask it out. --Something like Partch demanding fantastic tuning accuracy on instruments that would not stay in tune very long, and then admitting this in his book! Even admitting that he would not put an electric blower on the Chromelodeon, but allowed the pitch-variations coming from hand- or rather foot-peddalling of the bellows, as being more "natural" unquote. Fussing over the 2¢ skhisma and then having things like the Crychord and shimmering multiple unisons on the stringed instruments --psalteries I mean--after denouncing the pitch-fringes of the standard symphony orchestra's violin section.

My #10 Master cassette with the attempt to render commas ending in inglorious defeat every time since the chords cannot be sustained long enough to get all the fingered cello notes onto the button and they wouldn't stay beatless anyhow if I tried--well that sort of exactitude demands a computer or some electronic affair and then you want commas only part of the time.